

Message Text

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E.O. 11762: N/A

TAGS: PLAB, FR

SUBJECT: FO'S POLICY ON AFFILIATIONS

1. TENTH CONGRESS OF FO'S CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FEDERATION ON 9-11 NOVEMBER IN NANTES SERVED AS OCCASION FOR ANTOINE LAVAL, SECRETARY FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, TO ANNOUNCE FO'S POLICY REGARDING AFFILIATION WITH INTERNATIONAL BODIES. LAVAL SAID THAT FO INTENDS TO BE PRESENT "WITH ALL ITS INTRANSIGENCE" IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE ITS OR ICFTU SO AS TO RETAIN THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADVOCATE AND FIGHT FOR ITS VIEWS FROM WITHIN.

2. WHAT PROMPTED LAVAL'S STATEMENT DELIVERED IN HIS USUAL ELOQUENT MANNER WAS THE REACTION OF FO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FEDERATION TO THE ADMISSION (LAST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AUGUST) BY THE IFBWW (INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF

BUILDING AND WOOD /WRKERS) OF CFDT'S CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FEDERATION. FO'S FIRST IMPULSE WAS TO THREATEN A DISAFFILIATION FROM IFBUW TO EXPRESS ITS DISAPPROVAL OF THE DECISION TO AFFILIATE CFDT IN THE FACE OF FO'S OPPOSITION. THE QUESTION WAS RAISED IN THE FO CONFEDERAL BUREAU WHICH UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF LAVAL, AND RELUCTANT AGREEMENT BY BERGERON, TOOK THE DECISION THAT IT WAS FO'S DUTY TO REMAIN IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS OF WHICH THEY HAVE BECOME MEMBERS EVEN IF OCCASIONALLY ACTIONS ARE TAKEN BY THESE ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH FO DOES NOT AGREE. AS A RESULT THE CONSTRUCTION WORKERS FEDERATION WAS ADVISED TO REMAIN IN IFBWW.

3. IN TALKING WITH LABATT LAVAL MADE THE INTERESTING COMMENT THAT FO WOULD BE INCONSISTENT IF ON ONE HAND IT CRITICIZED AFL-CIO'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE ICFTU AND ON THE OTHER HAND FO WERE TO PRACTICE DISAFFILIATION AS A RESPONSE TO DECISIONS WITH WHICH IT WAS NOT IN AGREEMENT. FO RECOGNIZES NOW THAT IT CANNOT WIN ALL THE BATTLES AND THAT ITS CHANCES OF WINNING ANY DEPEND ON ITS REMAINING AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT IN THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN WHICH IT HAS TAKEN A SEAT.

4. IN A SEPARATE CONVERSATION WITH LABATT JOHN LOFBLAU, IFBWW SECRETARY GENERAL WHO WAS ALSO IN NANTES, SAID THAT HE AND IFBWW AS A WHOLE ARE IN FACT RELIEVED TO KNOW THAT THE FO FEDERATION WILL CONTINUE TO BE AN ACTIVE MEMBER IN THE IFBWW.

5. COMMENT: THE FIRST CONSLUSION TO BE DRAWN FROM THE FOREGOING IS THAT FO WILL NOT WALK OUT OF ETUC IF THE CGT IS ADMITTED INTO IT AND WILL KEEP ON FIGHTING TO OFFSET WHATEVER IMPACT CGT'S ADMISSION MIGHT HAVE ON ETUC'S POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES.

6. WHAT REALLY LIES BEHIND FO'S MORE REALISTIC STANCE ABOVE IS THE AWARENESS THAT A POLICY OF DISAFFILIATION WOULD LEAD TO FO'S ISOLATION AND LOSS OF LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ANY INFLUENCE IT MAY STILL HAVE. AFTER ALL, FO IS NOT AFL-CIO OR DGB. BEYOND THAT, HOWEVER, THERE IS FEELING AMONG FO LEADERS THAT THINGS ARE NOT GOING TOO BADLY FOR THE "FREE LABOR MOVEMENT" AND THAT AN INCREASING NUMBER OF TRADE UNIONS THROUGHOUT THE WORLD ARE SHOWING WILL AND DETERMINATION TO RESIST COMMUNIST TACTICS AND RHETORIC. DGB'S RESISTANCE TO THE CGT ADMISSION INTO THE ETUC IS PERHAPS THE

SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT RECENT DEVELOPMENT WHICH HAS
HEARTENED FO AND HAS LED THEM TO ADOPT A POLICY OF
"INTRANSIGENT PRESENCE" RATHER THAN ONE OF WITHDRAWAL.
RUSH

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